

lité malgré les précautions prises.» Ces déclarations nous reposent de tel ou tel historien qui affiche pompeusement sa possession tranquille de la vérité...

Bien plus que les conclusions qu'il apporte (toutes intéressantes et à retenir), le grand mérite de ce livre est le travail critique auquel l'auteur s'est livré sur ses sources; la vérification des données occupe d'ailleurs une tranche importante de cet ouvrage. L'auteur établit qu'il y a dans notre état civil un sous-enregistrement considérable. Sur les 4 280 enfants de son échantillon, il en compte 566 qui ont été « découverts en dépit du silence des registres paroissiaux sur leur date de naissance, ce qui représente 0,8 naissance retrouvée par famille », et, selon l'auteur, il resterait 351 naissances non retrouvées. Sous-enregistrement aussi des décès d'enfants: sur 4 631 décès, on ne retrouve que 2 334 actes qui les attestent, « soit un décès pour deux enfants nés au Canada »; même misère du côté des sépultures en général, où il manque 20 à 25% des actes. Du côté des mariages (que l'on connaît par l'acte d'état civil, par le contrat ou par la naissance d'un enfant), il y a plus d'efficacité, mais même là, « la fraction d'actes relevés n'atteint pas 87% ». Charbonneau affirme: « Dans des conditions parfaites, les 691 fiches de famille contiendraient 15151 actes. Or, nous n'en possédons que 10293 et 12251, avec les dates approchées. » Ou, comme il l'écrit ailleurs: sur un total d'environ 37 000 actes d'état civil, nous n'en retrouvons que 27 000. Il essaie d'expliquer ce phénomène de sous-enregistrement: c'est ici que nous sommes moins d'accord, du moins sur l'une de ses hypothèses, celle qui veut que, dans le cas d'enfants morts quelque temps après leur naissance, le sous-enregistrement ait été en quelque sorte un geste délibéré du prêtre pour ne pas étaler au grand jour les retards à faire baptiser ces enfants; c'est supposer, sans fondement, une sorte de camouflage systématique, alors qu'il faut plutôt se rappeler qu'à cette époque on n'avait pas tellement encore le souci d'un état civil rigoureux, état civil qui, du reste, n'était tout de même en France et ici que de création récente. De même il est opportun de rappeler que, dans le cas des engagements pour l'Ouest (autre source d'information pour le démographe), il y a aussi un sous-enregistrement dont il faut tenir compte, car on passait aussi des contrats sous seing privé: saura-t-on jamais en quelle proportion par rapport aux actes notariés ?

Quoi qu'il en soit, la méthode avec laquelle l'auteur approche ses sources pour l'étude des 691 familles, nous paraît marquer une étape décisive dans la reconstruction des familles des XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles. Reconstruction faite à la main, parce qu'elle est encore possible sur quatre ou cinq mille individus. Après cette étude exploratoire, il lui reste à s'appliquer à des milliers et des milliers d'individus: pareille étude, ajoute Charbonneau, « ne peut plus résulter de procédés entièrement manuels [...] la parole est aux ordinateurs ». Espérons, cependant, avec Henripin, « que cette mécanisation » ne réduira pas trop « l'ingéniosité et le discernement » qui donne toute sa valeur à *Vie et mort de nos ancêtres*.

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R.C. MACLEOD. — *The North-West Mounted Police and Law Enforcement, 1873-1905*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976.

Given the long-standing popular emphasis on the law-and-order theme as a characteristic of Canadian society, the theme itself has received remarkably little attention from Canadian historians. In recent years there has appeared a slight

interest in violence and several analyses of the use of military force in domestic events, but that is all. Strikingly absent have been any scholarly investigations of Canadian police forces.

The Mounties have, of course, received previous attention, but most of it has been romantic, superficial, weakly researched, and generally not too helpful to Canadian historians. In this latest book, however, Professor R.C. Macleod of the University of Alberta has gone far toward redressing the balance. *The N.W. M. P. and Law Enforcement* is well grounded in what would appear to have been an exhaustive examination of the pertinent primary sources, all of which are put to good use. The result is a study which is full of interesting and stimulating information and ideas.

The first portion of the book provides a chronological approach to the Police down to 1905. Two ideas stand out in this section. 'Benevolent despotism' is the heading of one of the chapters, but is really never developed explicitly as a theme. This is unfortunate, for the idea would seem to have considerable potential with regard to the Mounties (as with other government institutions in this country) and to the prairie west; it is striking, for example, that the Hudson's Bay Company, to which the theme would be equally applicable, was fading as a force in the west not long before the NWMP rose to replace it. Nor is there adequate exposition, though there is mention, of the concentration of power in the hands of the Police; what was the effect of giving the Mounties judicial, administrative, and police function in the vast, underpopulated prairies where there seems to have been little or no balancing force to offset such a consolidation of authority? Certainly the general comments in this regard offered by Professor Macleod are insufficient. Second, the reader is told in the introduction that the NWMP stands out from the British pattern of law enforcement and more closely resembles European police systems. This idea, while presented generally, is not developed in any specific way and is never returned to in the body of the book. This too is unfortunate, for on the surface the author himself offers (but does not develop) evidence to the contrary. Rather than being the exception to the British pattern, the Mounties seem simply to have followed a second pattern already established in India and Ireland where police were given greater power and wider authority when confronting 'inferior' and 'violent' races.

The second portion of the book contains thematic chapters of high quality. There is an excellent section on patronage, containing the sort of specific information necessary to appreciate this characteristic of the Canadian public service. The military tradition of the NWMP is elaborated so as to make clear its contribution to the social position of the Police. The chapters on crime and the liquor laws are good, particularly the emphasis placed on the social attitudes of the Mounties. The author gives full recognition to the crucial role of the NWMP in determining the extent of enforcement and punishment of various types of crime; crimes of violence and against property were considered most objectionable, while such crimes as prostitution and gambling were generally tolerated (in their place). The study of crime and punishment would, perhaps, have been improved by (and was certainly susceptible of) a quantitative analysis.

There is a stimulating chapter on social class, a theme which recurs in several other sections. The Police officers were drawn, we are told, from that familiar self-perpetuating élite of eastern Canada — connected usually with the government, with the Militia, or with an institution of higher learning (R.M.C.); the officers were usually Canadian-born and either Anglican or Roman Catholic in religion. This is all very believable and important, but surely its impact would have been strengthened by some statistical evidence: almost no specific evidence is offered

for these above generalizations, and little or no attention is paid to occupation (of the father, or of the officer prior to entry) or to ethnic background (apart from the French Canadians); such factors as rural/urban distribution and educational background are left unclear. In short, we are provided by no means with a complete picture of the officers of the NWMP, although the composite picture of the non-commissioned ranks is stronger. Nevertheless, Professor Macleod makes it clear that the Police officers perceived society to be divided by classes on hierarchical lines, and that the officers considered themselves to be members of the élite. It is not so clear, however, what influence these perceptions and this class background had on the actions of the NWMP and on the development of prairie society. Although there is some attention given to this in the treatment of crime and of minority groups, much more specific evidence and treatment of this question would be appreciated.

Finally, there is a chapter on minority groups. There is good coverage here of the racial views of the Police. Less convincing, however, is the analysis of their relations with the working class. While there is excellent evidence of a paternalistic approach towards peaceful workers, Professor Macleod is on weaker ground when he turns to labour conflict. Although he does not deny it, he certainly glosses over the Mounties' role as an instrument of the established and propertied interests — he does ignore one of the most striking examples of this in April 1885, as recounted in Sam Steele's memoirs.

More important in the history of the prairies were the relations between the NWMP and the Indians. In his study of these relations the author is far too kind to the Police. The NWMP brought to bear "a rational system of laws which operated to the benefit of all" (p. 148), we are told, but the rationality of their application is highly debatable. Evidence from Indians was disbelieved, while that from whites was accepted; such cultural institutions as the sun dance were attacked in Police reports; if a rancher complained about Indians on his land, the NWMP patrol would explain that the Indians had a legal right to be there and then "countless times" would take the natives back to their reserve! Neither Indians nor metis were accepted as regular members of the force, although by 1900 there was the suggestion of enlisting metis "who are intelligent, educated and would pass as white men" (p. 149). Professor Macleod hides none of this, but he treads very lightly when it comes time to draw conclusions from the evidence. One further point: it is disappointing that there is so little treatment of the NWMP role at the treaty negotiations in the 1870s; it has long struck me that the presence of the Police in company of the Government negotiators and the traditional firing, each time, of a thirteen-gun salute on an artillery piece must have considerably structured Indian perceptions of the Mounties and their "power to compel."

Lest this review appear too negative, it should be reiterated that this is an excellent book — a first rate addition to our knowledge of the NWMP, the west, and Canadian society in the time period. There are some complaints, it is true, mainly that the author 'pulls his punches' — he does not take his conclusions as far as the evidence would seem to allow. But the book is still a good one, and Professor Macleod is to be congratulated. I recommend the book strongly.

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